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Abstract

This study uses the firing of Coach Bobby Knight from Indiana University as a case study in order to analyze the rhetorical efficacy of adapting to the audience’s shared values through attendance to the intertextual context. By adhering to the intertextual context, Knight successfully played on certain audience values and beliefs and, as a result, managed to repair his image and help save his career. Knight’s farewell address invoked the themes of hard work, family, and thankfulness. This study extends Achter’s (2000) and Ware and Linkugel’s (1973) research in apologia in order to emphasize the importance of the intertextual context.

Introduction

Sports are influential in shaping society and establishing heroes and role models. The popularity of sports in American culture leads to the unrelenting media coverage of athletic competitions as well as sports figures’ personal actions. Because of this constant coverage, numerous events become major news stories and sometimes force athletes and coaches to defend themselves from varying accusations through the use of apologia. These defenses, typically in the form of interviews, speeches, and formal statements, provide an extensive supply of material that can be analyzed to illustrate what makes apologia successful or unsuccessful, as well as to analyze how outside factors can intertextually affect how apologia is received by an audience.

This study uses the firing of Bobby Knight as a case study in order to analyze the rhetorical efficacy of adapting to the audience’s shared values through attendance to the intertextual context. Bobby Knight, Indiana University’s (IU) head coach for 29 years, was an icon in a state where basketball is treated as a religion. Under his tutelage, Indiana won three National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) National Championships and 11 Big Ten Conference titles (Bynum, 1991). Knight, however, was fired in 2000 when he violated a zero-tolerance policy stemming from years of high tempered antics and accusations of physical abuse and racial comments. Knight’s career survived his fiery outbursts and eventual firing from Indiana. Now, in fact, Knight is the head coach of the relatively successful Texas Tech men’s basketball program. The question of how Knight continued with his successful career after such a public firing looms large. I argue that through adhering to the intertextual context, Knight successfully played on certain audience values and beliefs and as a result managed to repair his image and help save his career.
Analysis of Knight’s apologetic rhetoric is conducted on his farewell address to the university’s students upon his departure. This speech is chosen for analysis as it is the only public and prepared speech that Knight gave to explain his actions. Although Knight made several apologetical statements through a variety of interviews, Knight’s response in this speech was his only opportunity to strategically formulate what he wanted to say in a manner that he felt appropriate. Although his other apologetical statements were influenced by outside factors such as reporters’ questions determining how and what Knight addressed, the farewell address did not have to adhere to such limitations.

The intertextual factors worked to formulate a frame through which people in Indiana viewed basketball, thereby producing a unique rhetorical situation between Knight and his audience. Ultimately, the effectiveness of Knight’s apologia depends on the level to which he took advantage of this rhetorical situation through adherence to the intertextual factors. This, however, is not meant to establish or argue that Knight intentionally or unintentionally stressed these factors; instead it is an analysis of how the content and style of his responses adhered to the context.

Literature Review

Apologia is defined as a speech given in self-defense (Ware & Linkugel, 1973) and modern research has produced a vast amount of information pertinent to its study. Much of the research focuses on political speeches such as Senator Edward Kennedy’s “To the People of Massachusetts” (Ling, 1969), Marcus Garvey’s “Address to the Jury” (Ware & Linkugel, 1973), and Richard Nixon’s “Checkers” speech (Benoit, 1995). Beyond analyzing speech texts, additional research formulated and analyzed prescriptive frameworks of what characterizes apologia (e.g. Abelson, 1959; Kramer & Olsen, 2002; Ryan 1982, 1984; Ware & Linkugel, 1973), analyzed image restoration strategies through apologia (e.g. Benoit, 1995; Benoit & Hirson, 2001; Brinson & Benoit, 1995), and refined apologetic theory (e.g. Burkholder, 1991; Kruse, 1977, 1981).

Ware and Linkugel’s (1973) watershed essay on apologia, however, consistently is used as a starting point for modern day apologia study (e.g. Achter, 2000; Hearit, 1997; Hoover, 1989). They argue that apologetical statements are identifiable by four factors or modes of resolution: denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence. Denial is defined as a negation of facts, sentiments, objects, or relationships. The second mode of resolution, bolstering, is the opposite of denial as it reinforces the existence of a fact, sentiment, object, or relationship. Through bolstering, a speaker attempts to identify himself/herself with the audience. The third mode of resolution is differentiation and is used to divide the old context into two or more new constructs of reality that take on a meaning distinctively different from their meaning in the old homogeneous context. The fourth mode of resolution is transcendence. This strategy joins some fact, sentiment, object or relationship with some larger context in which the audience does not presently view that attribute.
By understanding these modes of resolution, Knight’s speech can be analyzed to show how he utilizes these apologetical strategies, as well as how extending on these modes can lead to better rhetorical efficacy. It is not enough to portray the situation in a new perspective; Knight needs to do so in a way that appeals to the values embedded in the cultural context that are a result of the intertextual issues.

Research by Hoover (1989) broadened Ware and Linkugel’s focus from apologia’s structural makeup to the analysis of what factors are important to the overall success or failure of apologia. Hoover argued that apologia is constrained by a complex hierarchy of cultural and personal values, and rhetorical failure results from a mismatch of values between the accused and the audience. Hoover suggested that a speaker who holds the same cultural values as the audience has a better chance of successfully passing through a rhetorical situation rather than one whose values are opposite of those the audience holds. Therefore, in order to analyze apologetic strategies, research needs to reach beyond the immediate situation and include additional factors such as cultural discourse and values.

Hoover’s (1989) research thereby is used to show the relative success of Knight’s apologia through his ability to communicate shared cultural values through an adherence to the intertextual context. In order to analyze Knight’s apologia, it is critical to understand how values originate and how they are communicated through intertextuality. Intertextuality focuses on the belief that works of literature develop from systems, codes, and traditions established by previous works of literature (Kristeva, 1984). Kristeva (1984) stated:

If one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an inter-textuality), one then understands that its “place” of enunciation and its denoted “object” are never single, complete, and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, incapable of being tabulated. (pp. 59-60)

Reading a text, consequently, presents the reader with a network of textual relations which the reader traces in order to understand the text. Thus, reading becomes a process of moving between texts, and meaning “exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations” (Allen, 2000, p. 1). Stemming from the definition of the term, a variety of studies developed; for example, intertextuality studies addressed marketing campaigns (e.g. Dewhirst & Sparks, 2003; Kong, 2001), literary practices (e.g. Jones, 2002; Kristeva, 1984; Miczmk, 2000; Turski, 2001), and even branched out to include film studies (e.g. Dunne, 2000; Metz, 1997).

Achter’s (2002) study analyzed the effect of intertextuality on apologia through the method of analyzing popular texts and intertextual factors that create unique situations and thus frame the audience in a certain way. Achter used the 1990 Minnesota gubernatorial campaign as a case study in which Independent Republican candidate Jon Grunseth is accused of sexual misconduct by several.
women and argued that, in the late 1980’s, the narrative of men who cheated on their wives gained particular presence through the public sphere and popular culture. In the public sphere, Gary Hart, Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker and others disgracefully fell from public life as they were accused of or caught in adulterous affairs. Furthermore, through popular culture, the movie Fatal Attraction and several best-selling books “reinforced the increasing intolerance for infidelity and offered women a way to respond” (p. 322). Achter argued that the combination of these factors created a “public vocabulary” and an intertextual frame for interpretation when the Gruneth scandal broke.

Similarly, this study analyzes the intertextual factors in relation to Knight by first describing Indiana’s intertextual factors such as the state’s basketball “monuments,” the high school playoffs setup, and the film Hoosiers. The study then analyzes Knight’s apologetic statement through Ware and Linkugel’s modes of resolution. These modes illustrate the techniques Knight used to redirect the situation in an attempt to produce successful apologia. Finally, the analysis looks at Knight’s adherence to the intertextual context to illustrate how successful apologia was produced through the communication of shared values with the audience.

Intertextual Factors

The importance of basketball in Indiana has grown over the years to make the two virtually synonymous. This union of sport and state began forming during the years leading up to and while Bobby Knight coached at IU. Throughout the later half of the 20th century, there were several intertextual factors that framed basketball in the state and associated Knight and Indiana basketball with hard work, family, and thankfulness. Three factors in place were basketball “cathedrals,” the state high school playoff system, and nationally screened movies. These intertextual factors illustrate and construct the importance of the sport and provide a framework to view the sport.

Basketball “Cathedrals”

For many towns in Indiana, communities have developed around basketball arenas. Basketball stadiums and gymnasiums both represent and construct the importance of basketball due to their physical presence, their ability to unify communities, as well as the material and cultural capital expended in order to construct them. These structures bring thousands of fans together and provide a place where communities can gather to support their teams in a unified effort. Communities even donate large amounts of money to have arenas built in their area. Two specific examples of arenas in Indiana that communicate these values are the Hinkle Fieldhouse and the Chrysler Center.

Built in 1928, the Hinkle Fieldhouse was originally the largest basketball arena in the United States and since then has been the setting for numerous state high school championship games. Currently, it is a center for collegiate basketball as it is the home of Butler University’s basketball team. Besides high school and college games, however, it also served as the site for the United States
Olympic basketball trials, the first USA-USSR basketball games, as well as All-Star basketball games for the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the American Basketball Association (ABA).

Hinkle Fieldhouse’s community worth is best described through the 1954 boy’s state basketball playoffs final (an event memorialized in the motion picture Hoosiers). The fieldhouse was packed as Milan High School (enrollment: 161 students) defeated the state’s basketball powerhouse Muncie Central (enrollment: over 1600 students) in arguably one of the most exciting high school games in history. As 1:18 ticked down to 18 seconds with the score tied, Milan took the final shot to win the state championship 32-30 (Merron, para. 18). Fifty years later, the high school still displays the state championship trophy and the winning game net. Hinkle Fieldhouse’s ability to bring the Milan community together as the setting place for a proud moment that is still remembered and glorified, demonstrates the structure’s cultural worth and importance to the state. The gymnasium, as an epicenter of where fans gather to adore and venerate their teams, becomes similar to a place of worship and a symbol of unity.

The Chrysler Center is another example of a monument devoted to basketball. Indiana is home to nine of the ten largest high school basketball gymnasiums in the nation and New Castle, IN, is home to the largest one of them all. New Castle Chrysler High School’s Chrysler Center was built in 1959 and officially seats 9,325 people – enough to seat half of the town’s population. A February 25, 2004 USA Today article clearly described how important the arena is to the town and state:

Rome has St. Peter’s, Paris has Notre Dame and New Castle has the Fieldhouse. All three cathedrals reflect their respective cities’ history, culture and aspirations. In New Castle, population 18,000, the past, present and future are centered on Indiana high school basketball. Officially, The Fieldhouse has room for 9,325 spectators, but there have been times when more than 10,000 fans squeezed into the 81,000-square-foot building while a thousand more stood outside in the chilly evening air. (Rubail, 2004, p. C3)

Even the manner in which the Fieldhouse was built in 1959 illustrates its importance. During that time, members of the New Castle community were tired of making the 18-mile drive to the nearby Muncie Central gymnasium which held 6,500 people. The community rallied together and raised over $1 million to have a new and closer arena built. The fact that a town of approximately 18,000 people in the late 1950s raised such a large amount of money so they would not have to drive less than 20 miles to another town clearly emphasized how much the New Castle community loved the game and its players.

Basketball monuments such as the Hinkle Fieldhouse and the Chrysler Center demonstrate the importance of basketball in Indiana through their cultural worth. The buildings accomplish this through their physical presence, their ability to unify communities, and the material and cultural capital used to construct them. This intertextual factor, therefore, affects the rhetorical situation Knight is...
in as basketball is framed in a way that associates community and importance with the sport.

**Indiana’s High School Basketball Playoffs**

The history and uniqueness of Indiana’s high school playoff system is critical in expressing the association between Indiana basketball and hard work and perseverance. In traditional high school playoffs throughout the nation, schools are divided into a division based on their size and location. Throughout the playoffs, schools only play other schools within their division until a championship game decides who the state champion is for that division. Therefore, a state could have numerous state champions, and many teams never have the opportunity to play against each other. Up until 1997, however, every school in Indiana entered the same playoff system. Small schools played big schools and the best team was declared champion. Oscar Robertson, one of Indiana’s most famous high school athletes who continued to be a successful college and professional athlete, expressed on his personal website just what people thought about Indiana’s unique playoff arrangement:

> I think single class basketball was one of the things that made Indiana the No. 1 high school basketball state in the country, and the state tournament was something everyone eagerly anticipated because of the possibility that a school of any size could go all the way. (Robertson, 2004, FAQ section)

Because the playoff system offered all schools, regardless of their size, the opportunity for success, the idea of working hard and equal opportunity was driven home to the players and everyone who watched. Basketball, therefore, turned into the chance to prove that hard work and skill could turn the “underdog” into the biggest winner of them all. Indiana’s unique basketball playoff system produced champions that were truly the best out of the state and communicated to the players, the fans, and everyone who was familiar with the playoffs, that an equal opportunity for success existed for those who worked hard, were diligent, and persevered.

**Hoosiers**

The movie Hoosiers is a third intertextual factor that frames Indiana basketball. The 1986 production offered the American audience a vision of Indiana basketball featuring hard work, discipline and commitment. The film’s depiction of the 1954 Milan High School team was popular throughout the nation, grossing over $28 million, and garnering three Best Supporting Actor nominations for Dennis Hopper and one Academy Award nomination for Best Score. Through the extent this film was viewed and the way it portrayed the sport, Hoosiers produced an additional intertextual factor by influencing and producing an image of Indiana basketball.
The themes of hard work, discipline, and commitment are synonymous with the basis of the movie as the small town team overcomes the larger opponents to win in the end. Beyond the overall main idea of the film, however, these themes are illustrated through relationships between certain characters. For example, the film revolves around a middle-aged man named Norman Dale (Gene Hackman) who just moved to Hickory to take over the head coaching position. The challenge of the job and the expectations of the small town are illustrated in a town meeting at the local barbershop where the townsmen tell Dale how he should coach the team. Dale’s unwillingness to follow their advice and implementation of his own coaching techniques produces a volatile situation in which the town soon votes to have him fired. Dale avoids being fired through the help of the team’s star player, and continues to coach the team by stressing commitment, hard work, and discipline. Through his devotion to his team and hard work, Dale quickly gains the loyalty of his team and the town as his coaching techniques lead to an eventual state championship.

Another theme stressed in the movie is the idea of helping others in need. This is illustrated through Dale’s character as his opportunity to coach is a favor from an old friend. The movie eventually discloses that Dale, once an NCAA coach, was permanently suspended from the college ranks after punching a player. Hickory High School’s principal offers the coaching job to his friend as a way to help Dale out. Helping others is also shown through Shooter (Dennis Hopper), the town drunk and father of one of the team’s players. Dale offers Shooter an opportunity to become the team’s assistant coach with the stipulation that he remains sober. Through the position, Shooter begins his road to recovery and stops embarrassing his son through his drunken antics. Shooter’s recovery is due to Dale who offered him help, just as the school’s principal had helped him. Therefore, these characters and the opportunities given to them exemplify the theme of helping others out.

Finally, family is another theme stressed in the movie. This is shown through Shooter’s recovery and eventual reconnection with his son. During the evolution of their relationship, Shooter and his son develop a bond where the son moves from being embarrassed about his father to loving and respecting him. This is typified as Shooter is recovering in the hospital when his son tells him: “You’re going to get better. Couple of months when you get out of here, we’re going to get a house… both of us. I love you dad” (Hoosiers, 1986). Shooter and his son survive the problems that threatened to destroy their relationship and reconnect through the familial bond of love and togetherness.

Hoosiers, through the story of the Hickory Huskers championship and the individual relationships that evolve around the team, communicates the ideas of hard work, discipline, commitment, helping others, and family. The movie illustrates the importance of basketball to these ideas and the importance of these ideas to basketball. By illustrating how basketball relates to these themes, the audience makes the connection between the stories and how they view basketball in the state. Therefore, as millions of people watched Hoosiers, basketball in Indiana is framed in such a way as to promote these themes. Through this inter-
textual factor, the values that the movie communicates are engrained in the minds of Indiana residents, thus affecting Knight’s rhetorical situation.

Through intertextual factors in the state such as huge basketball gymnasiums, the high school playoff system, and Hoosiers, basketball in Indiana is framed in such a way as to communicate certain values. These factors combine to communicate the importance of the sport, hard work, equal opportunity, family, perseverance, teamwork, helping others in need, and success. Therefore, Knight is in a unique rhetorical situation as his audience’s perception of basketball in Indiana is already framed to associate the sport with these values. Knight has the opportunity to focus on these themes as he finds himself in front of an audience of thousands as he delivers his apologia in response to his firing.

Knight’s Farewell Address

On the evening of September 13, 2000, Knight delivered a farewell speech on IU’s campus in order to address his firing and the events surrounding it. This speech resulted from Knight’s dismissal from Indiana University on September 10, after he was accused of grabbing a student. This act was treated as a breaking point for the university’s administration which had repeatedly handled 25 years of questionable incidents caused by the coach. In the few days following his firing, Knight delivered several apologetic statements in the form of interviews, press conferences, and speeches in an attempt to explain his reasons behind his actions. This apologia was often conducted with little notice and the majority of his statements were in response to questions from the media. As early as the night of his firing, however, Knight knew that he had to publicly explain his actions without the influence of media reporters and questions. On the evening of September 13, therefore, Knight addressed over 6,000 students, alumni, fans, townspeople, and critics who had converged at Dunn Meadow on IU’s campus to hear him.

Throughout Knight’s speech, he highlighted and emphasized certain themes that are important to himself and his audience. Specifically, Knight focused on family, hard work, and helping others. These themes had been communicated through the intertextual factors that were in place and Knight plays on them throughout his speech. By doing this, Knight highlights a variety of values that his audience can identify with and are illustrated through his farewell address.

Family

One theme that Knight continually stresses throughout his address is the concept of family. Knight’s idea of family, however, extends beyond the traditional definition of blood relatives to include his players, as well as his audience who constitutes a “basketball family.” Through this technique, Knight turns the situation from one of separating himself from his audience through his actions into a speech that reinforces the familial bond that he and his audience share.

Knight’s strategy of shifting attention from himself to the bond between him and his audience is an illustration of Ware and Linkugel’s concept of bolstering. This concept is a source of identification and, in order to be effective,
bolstering reinforces a relationship that has already been established. Knight’s use of this technique, therefore, reinforces his link to his audience. Knight identifies with the audience by emphasizing that the audience’s interests are a factor in how he and his family functions, by stressing how important his family is to him, and by including his audience in the basketball family that has been created through the unified support of Indiana’s program.

In his farewell address, Knight identifies with the audience by emphasizing how his wife has always been there to make sure that he keeps students a priority. This is illustrated at the beginning of the farewell address as Knight begins his speech:

And when I, uh, when I uh … sometimes when maybe I slip a little bit or I don’t or I might not have that at the top of priorities, my wife Karen always reminds me, because I guarantee you, in the 12 or 13 years that she’s been here, there’s nobody that has been more concerned or give me more ideas, on what could be done as far as basketball is concerned for you the students, than my wife Karen can. (Knight, 2000, para. 1)

Knight, through the help of his wife, relates how she was constantly there to remind him of the importance of keeping students as a priority. The audience thus becomes linked to his family as they are a priority in the decisions that he and his wife discuss.

Knight again stresses his bond with the audience at the end of the speech, but he rhetorically deepens the family theme by moving beyond himself and his wife to include his entire family. This is illustrated as Knight ends the speech by asking the audience to wish him and his entire family good luck in the future:

Now … now as I wish each of you the very best, and I thank each of you for your support of myself, Karen, and the rest of our family, I ask something from you …. And as I leave here I’d like each of you to just take a minute, a full minute, to bow your heads in whatever way you do, wish myself and my family the very best, as I wish you, the very best. (Knight, 2000, para. 14)

In this statement, Knight expresses his sincere best wishes to those in the audience, but then asks the audience to do the same for him and his family and return the well wishes. Through this technique, Knight further establishes the family theme by portraying himself and his family as one group desiring the audience’s support, as well as including the audience within the idea of his family. Interestingly, Knight requests that the audience “bow” their heads as they wish his family the best. This action reflects what one would do when one is praying and, thereby, Knight identifies with the audience by suggesting that their relationship is so strong that they would include one another in their requests to God.

The theme of family, however, does not stop with those related to Knight or the current students in the audience. Knight also includes those who are argua-
bly even more important to him within this rhetorical situation: the Indiana
University basketball family. Throughout Knight’s speech, he refers to and stresses
the importance of the fans to the university as a whole, as well as to his personal
experiences at IU. This is shown specifically at the beginning of the speech:

You know, we’re … I’m here, uh, talking to you as students in the year
2000. But what I think I’m really doing is talking to all students who have
attended this university since 1971. How … how many of you … how many
of you students had a mom or a dad or a brother or a sister who have at-
tended Indiana since 1971? I mean, I’ve been here so long, have any of you
have [sic] grandparents that attended Indiana? (Knight, 2000, para. 3)

In this address, Knight refers six separate times to the students who attended
IU since 1971 as moms, dads, brothers, sisters, and grandparents. Through this
technique Knight stresses the long relationship that he has had with both the
current students at Indiana, and with those people closest to them. This also
stresses the closeness of the relationship that Knight and the audience’s relatives
have shared together, thereby turning the situation into a “family matter”—an
experience and a disappointment to be shared with him and the entire Indiana
basketball family.

Once he establishes that this matter involves all of the IU students and fur-
ther identifies with them and their family members, Knight goes on to stress
how that relationship transcended into support for players that were close to
him. Knight highlights the support that the student body had for the Indiana bas-
ketball program over the years:

I mean, you had parents and brothers and sisters that rooted for (players)
May and Benson and Buckner and Cruise and Abernathy and Woodson and
Tolbert and Turner and Kitchell and Whitman and Chaney and…and
[cheers] and the Grahams and Steve Isle and everybody we’ve had here.
(Knight, 2000, para. 4)

By relating the audience with his players, Knight categorizes the audience
and their family members as supportive of people that mean the most to him.
This support, therefore, translates into an identification between Knight and his
supporters that has a long and deep tradition through the experiences that they
all have encountered through basketball.

By stressing the theme of family throughout his speech, Knight focuses at-
tention away from his firing to the identification that exists between him and his
audience. Knight accomplishes this by illustrating the role the audience has in
his life and how they influence his actions, and by stressing the familial bond
that has developed through their support of Indiana basketball. Therefore, a sit-
uation is created in which the audience members identify with Knight in a manner
similar to what families experience. In the same fashion as families go through
conflicts and success together, so too do Knight and his basketball family.
Furthermore, Knight’s use of this theme is rhetorically effective as Knight is attentive to the rhetorical situation and the intertextual context. Indiana basketball’s intertextual factors, specifically communicated through Hoosiers, put Knight in a situation in which he could repeatedly emphasize the idea of family and how important it is to him. His adherence to what the movie communicated in relation to Indiana basketball and family, thereby, allows Knight to move beyond the situation and establish a relationship that can exist beyond his firing.

**Hard work**

Another theme that Knight emphasizes in his speech is the theme of hard work. Knight stresses that this is not only important to his success as a coach and the success of his teams, but that it is important to the overall success of his audience members. Through stressing this theme, Knight reinforces an additional bond that exists between him and his audience. Similar to Knight’s use of identifying with his audience through family, Knight’s focus on hard work is an example of Ware and Linkugel’s concept of bolstering. In the address he emphasizes that not only was the team’s success due to the hard work of the players, but he connects their success to the hard work of the fans. This reinforces the bond between Knight and his audience by identifying with each other through a shared appreciation of hard work. In the speech, Knight uses this theme by stressing the importance of hard work to the success of IU’s basketball team, as well as to the success of the individuals in his audience.

The theme of hard work, and Knight’s appreciation of it, is illustrated in the speech through his emphasis on how it helps him and his team. In fact, Knight credits the hard work of the fans in making the team succeed at crucial times:

> And the one thing I’ve taken great pride in, with the student body, is how hard the students have always rooted for us. How…I remember games when we were trying to get back from having lost, or maybe we’d lost a couple of games, and the students sensed that we needed something a little bit extra, and they gave it to us. There were times when we had to win two or three games in a row, and as the players rose to the occasion, so too did the students. (Knight, 2000, para. 4)

By acknowledging the hard work of the students, Knight shows how important it is to him, as well as gives credit to those audience members who have contributed to the success of the team. Knight also acknowledges the power that his audience has in relation to the team by suggesting that some of Indiana’s success is beyond anything that he could do as a coach. Instead, a part of the success of the program was credited to his audience members, thereby reinforcing the identification between them as both Knight and the hard work of the fans were integral in the success of Indiana’s team. Knight reiterates the theme of hard work at the conclusion of his farewell address:
I want to wish you all the best, at whatever you do, but to be the best, and not even to be the best, but to have the best opportunities, you’ve gotta work to be the very best student that you can. (Knight, 2000, para. 13)

In this quotation, Knight stresses the importance of hard work beyond basketball and into their academic lives. Success as a student, Knight states, will ultimately lead to success in whatever the students choose to do in life. Rhetorically, this allows Knight to further identify with the audience as it suggests that he has a vested interest in their personal lives. Therefore, Knight transcends from a distant coach to a close friend who truly cares about the audience members’ lives beyond their years at Indiana.

Through Knight’s focus on hard work in his speech, his apologia is effective as Knight creates a sense of identification with his audience. Furthermore, adhering to this theme is effective as Knight attends to the intertextual context that communicated the importance of hard work through Hoosiers and the high school playoff system. Intertextually, the association of hard work and basketball had been established and Knight took advantage of this shared cultural value by stressing the theme throughout his speech.

Helping Others

One final theme that Knight stresses throughout his speech is helping others; he does this by portraying his actions as being meant for the benefit of others as opposed to being mean spirited, and by asking the audience to help others through their participation in a walk/run for cancer that his wife is helping set up. Through this theme, Knight employs Ware and Linkugel’s concepts of transcendence and bolstering. Knight’s use of transcendence moves the audience from viewing his incident as an abusive gesture to an attempt to try to teach the student manners and he identifies with his audience through bolstering by offering his audience an opportunity to help others through participating in a charity event.

One way Knight portrays his desire to help others is through his interpretation of the incident with the student he grabbed, Kent Harvey. Knight provides his audience with an explanation of how his behavior towards Harvey was an altruistic attempt to teach Harvey a valuable lesson rather than a violent altercation:

You’ve got a kid that was a student here that, that uh [boos]. Just, just a second; whoa, whoa, whoa. You got a kid who was a student here that I tried to show something to about courtesy, and I really believe that he got caught in a real surprise situation. I think he was a kid who was a little bit flustered, maybe a little bit more than a little bit flustered. I think he’s been kind of led astray by … by … by … kind of led astray by a father, a step-father, that’s the only penance that kid ever needs. So … so, let that kid be a student, and let him get on with life. (Knight, 2000, para. 11)
In this account, Knight justifies his action by asserting that it was something that he felt “morally” obligated to do. In doing so, Knight reframes the situation in such a way that portrays his behavior as right and good rather than abusive or deviant. By depicting himself as someone who was trying to teach a young man a beneficial lesson, Knight gives the audience an opportunity to view the physical reaction as an attempt to help someone as opposed to hurting him and thereby view Knight as a positive role model.

Knight not only shows how he helps others through his actions, but he provides the opportunity to his audience to identify with him and also help others through their own actions. For example, in the beginning of the speech Knight asks his audience to participate in a walk-run for cancer that his wife has helped set up for the following month:

Now, what she’s done, and what I hope all of you students will take part in, is a walk/run for cancer, that Karen has worked hard on, that will be set up here in Bloomington on the morning of the 14th of October. And she really wants you students to participate in it because there aren’t any of us anywhere that haven’t been touched, in some way, by cancer. (Knight, 2000, para. 2)

In this statement, Knight describes an opportunity for his audience to participate in an activity that helps their “neighbors” and presents it as a chance to help people they personally know. Furthermore, Knight’s strategic placement of this request at the beginning of his speech immediately establishes his willingness to help others. The audience gathered to hear Knight explain his actions, but he starts the speech with a seemingly unrelated call for charity participation. Through this, Knight instantly portrays himself as caring and compassionate and sets the stage to then address his physical confrontation with a student.

Knight’s emphasis on helping others is also effective as it adheres to the intertextual context. For example, helping others is especially evident in Hoosiers. In the movie Dale went out of his way to help Shooter overcome his alcoholism. Furthermore, Hickory High School’s principal helps Dale start a new life with a new basketball career by offering him the coaching position at the school. Therefore, Hoosiers is able to construct several stories, all in connection with basketball, that offer the audience a consistent way of viewing basketball with the theme of helping others. This connection helps frame Knight’s remarks in such a way that his speech plays on what the intertextual factor communicates.

By expressing his obligation to teach manners, showing his concern for others’ health, and asking the audience to support Indiana basketball, Knight clearly illustrates the theme of helping others. All of these are selfless requests and are for the benefit of others—a young man, cancer patients, and the hard working Indiana basketball players. Knight, therefore, reinforces the theme of helping others and transcends the immediate situation that portrays him as abusive into one that portrays him as courteous and having others’ intentions at heart. Furthermore, this theme allows Knight to identify with his audience by establishing that together they can help others through participating in the cancer walk, as
well as through continued support of Indiana basketball. This theme is effective as it adheres to what had intertextually been established through Hoosiers. By associating basketball with helping others within the movie, Knight’s emphasis of this theme in his speech coincides with the intertextual factors and, therefore, is effective.

**Conclusion**

This paper argues for the rhetorical efficacy of intertextuality as a way of analyzing the case study of Bobby Knight’s major apologia. I argue that Knight found success by using themes that adhere to the intertextual context. Ultimately, this study extends Achter’s (2000) and Ware and Linkugel’s (1973) research in apologia in order to emphasize the importance of the intertextual context. Such factors in Indiana including basketball “cathedrals,” the high school playoffs, and the movie Hoosiers, frame the way basketball is viewed in the state. Through the themes he uses, Knight communicates values that adhere to the intertextual context. Knight’s appreciation of family, hard work, and helping others appeals to the established framework of how basketball is portrayed in Indiana. The themes Knight uses employs Ware and Linkugel’s modes of resolution. Knight uses transference to avoid addressing the specifics of the situation and instead turns the audience to see other sides of his character. Additionally, he uses bolstering to identify with his audience and differentiation to give the audience a positive portrayal of himself. Through these themes and the modes of resolution that he uses, Knight produces successful apologia that adheres to the values that he shares with his audience.

Knight’s speech demonstrates Ware and Linkugel’s concept of bolstering through the themes of family and hard work. Knight uses the theme of family to identify with his audience through their mutual love of family and Indiana basketball. The theme of hard work connects with his audience by emphasizing how they both worked hard for the success of the program over the years. Differentiation appears when Knight uses the theme of thankfulness to portray himself as gracious and appreciative as opposed to the abusive and angry man illustrated through his interaction with Harvey. Knight depicts himself in a positive and generous way rather than the negative and harmful way the audience might previously have viewed him. Finally, Knight uses transcendence and bolstering through the theme of helping others. Knight transforms the overall incident of grabbing Harvey into a positive attempt to teach a young man courtesy and manners. Transcendence allows Knight to move the audience away from the particulars of the situation and present his interaction with Harvey in a new way, and bolstering is used to identify with the audience through their shared appreciation of helping others.

Through this case study, therefore, the importance of intertextual and contextual issues for the construction of apologia can be extended. This case study offers particular insight into the effectiveness of bolstering and transcendence, as Knight uses these techniques to help him transcend the immediacy of the situation. The key to these strategies, therefore, is an attendance to the values pro-
duced through intertextual relations. It is not enough for Knight to avoid the particularities of the situation or simply identify with the audience, but he must do so in a way that appeals to the values embedded in the cultural context.

Ware and Linkugel’s (1973) modes of resolution can, consequently, be extended to incorporate a domain outside of the immediate situation. Ware and Linkugel’s research demonstrates how the modes of resolution work within the apologetical genre, but only by analyzing the immediate rhetorical situation. By reworking the framework of apologia and accounting for contextual issues, a better and more accurate assessment of what constitutes apologia and how its components work together can be attained.

Additional study could also expand from local addresses in order to illustrate how intertextual factors work through apologia at the national level. Finally, by extending our understanding of the context beyond the immediate situation, we can use it as a springboard for the future analysis of public address and other rhetorical genres. This analysis and the findings in relation to intertextuality and apologia illustrate the importance of outside factors in rhetorical success and failure. It is the ultimate goal that through a better understanding of rhetorical success and failure in the past, the rhetoric field as a whole can grow and improve in the future.

References


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